

Message Text

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SUBJ: LOPEZ PORTILLO'S SECURITY SITUATION AND SECURITY TRAINING

1. LOPEZ PORTILLO COMMENCED THE CONVERSATION DURING OUR PRIVATE BREAKFAST MORNING OF AUGUST 24 WITH COMMENTS REGARDING THE CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION IN MEXICO AND PARTICULARLY AS IT AFFECTED HIM AND HIS FAMILY. HE WAS STILL SHAKEN BY ATTEMPT ON LIFE OF HIS SISTER MARGARITA LOPEZ PORTILLO. IT WAS STILL INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO HIM WHY HIS INNOCENT SISTER, A NON-POLITICAL, IDEALISTIC POETESS, WHOSE ONLY PUBLIC FUNCTIONS HAVE BEEN PURELY BUREAUCRATIC, SHOULD HAVE BEEN A TARGET. RESULTS OF ATTACK AND FACT THAT HER CAR HAD BEEN LITERALLY RIDDLED WITH BULLETS MADE IT SEEM LIKEN AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. ANOTHER THEORY HELD THAT IT HAD IN FACT BEGUN AS A KIDNAPPING ATTEMPT (DIRECTED AGAINST EITHER HIS MOTHER OR HIS SISTER) WHICH HAD DETERIORATED INTO A FREE-FOR-ALL FIREFIGHT.

2. HE COULD NOT EXPLAIN TO HIMSELF WHETHER IN FACT THERE WERE "OBSCURE FORCES" INVOLVED IN THIS OR WHETHER IT MERELY DERIVED FROM DESPERATION AND ALIENATION OF THE YOUTH, OFTEN OF MIDDLE CLASS, WHICH COMPOSED TERRORIST MOVEMENT. IN THE MEANTIME HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO DESCEND TO AN EYE-FOR-AN-EYE, TOOTH-FOR-A-TOOTH PSYCHOLOGY WHICH COULD POLARIZE MEXICO BUT HAD ADOPTED THE MORE ELEVATED ATTITUDE OF APPEALING FOR RECONCILIATION.

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3. HE SPOKE WITH ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION FOR THE GUARDS AND DRIVER, ALL FROM HIS NATIVE JALISCO, WHO WERE SO DEVOTED TO THE PROTECTION OF HIS SISTER THAT SEVERAL HAD DIED IN THE FRACAS. THERE WERE SIXTEEN INVOLVED ON THE TERRORISTS' SIDE AND THE FACT THAT FOUR GUARDS AND A FAITHFUL DRIVER WERE PREPARED TO RESIST SHOWED THAT PROFESSIONALISM AND DEVOTION, ALONG WITH LUCK, COULD STILL SAVE THE DAY.

4. HE CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD MOVED HIS SISTER AND TWO UNMARRIED SISTERS INTO HIS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING FOR THEIR GREATER SAFETY AND HIS OWN PEACE OF MIND. ANOTHER MARRIED SISTER, A HOUSEWIFE LIVING IN MEXICO CITY, HAD TO TAKE HER CHANCES LIVING, FORTUNATELY, IN RELATIVE OBSCURITY AND ANONYMITY. HE STRESSED THE NEED FOR CONTINUED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS NOT ONLY FOR HIMSELF BUT ALSO FOR OTHER PUBLIC FIGURES.

5. THIS GAVE ME A SUITABLE OPPORTUNITY TO REFER TO HIS REQUEST FOR SECURITY TRAINING AND I TOLD HIM THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAD RESPONDED BY SENDING DOWN ITS OWN CHIEF OF SECURITY, WHOSE OFFICE WAS CHARGED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WITH THE PROTECTION OF VISITING FOREIGN NOTABLES. HE HAD, IN FACT, COMMENCED LAST NIGHT EXPLORATORY TALKS WITH COLONEL GODINEZ. LOPEZ PORTILLO WAS GRATIFIED AT THE DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST.

6. I SAID THAT WHILE IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR ME TO ENTER INTO THE DETAILS OF THIS MATTER, THERE WERE TWO QUESTIONS WHICH APPARENTLY REQUIRED THOUGHT AND ANSWERS FROM LOPEZ PORTILLO HIMSELF:

(A) ONE WAS THE PUBLIC RELATONS ASPECT OF THIS TRAINING. WE WOULD OF COURSE ATTEMPT NOT TO PUBLICIZE IT IN ANY WAY -- AT THIS POINT HE INTERRUPTED TO EXPRESS STRONG AGREEMENT -- AT THE SAME TIME, DESPITE OUR MUTUAL EFFORTS, THE MATTER MIGHT COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION AND IT WOULD BE WELL TO GIVE THOUGHT TO HOW TO HANDLE THIS ASPECT. IN MAKING HIS DECISION HE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT PROVISION OF SUCH TRAINING WAS LEGITIMATE FUNCTION

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OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S OFFICE OF SECURITY.

(B) I ALSO ASKED THAT HE GIVE OUR VISITORS GUIDANCE AS TO HOW FAR THEY SHOULD GO IN REGARD TO CONTACTS WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT. LOPEZ PORTILLO PROMPTLY AND SOMEWHAT SHARPLY SAID THAT HE WISHED THAT THE TRAINING BE LIMITED TO HIS OWN PERSONAL GROUP. I TOLD HIM WE UNDERSTOOD THIS BUT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT

THIS MISSION BEHIND THE BACKS OF OTHER MEXICAN SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE MAIN BODY OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL STAFF, THE DFS (DEPARTAMENTO FEDERAL DE SEGURIDAD) AND THE JUDICIAL POLICE. I THOUGHT I DETECTED A SLIGHT SOMBERNESS COME OVER HIS FACE AT THE MENTION OF THE DFS AND HE AGAIN REPLIED RAPIDLY AND SOMEWHAT SHARPLY THAT THE MATTER OF CONTACTS WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE PRESENT SECURITY ESTABLISHMENT SHOULD BE LEFT ENTIRELY TO COLONEL GODINEZ.

7. COMMENT: FROM THIS CONVERSATION I DETECTED CONTINUING UNEASE BOTH IN REGARD TO MOTIVES FOR AND CHARACTER OF ATTEMPT AGAINST HIS SISTER AND IN REGARD TO THE SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE MEXICAN STATE.
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